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LUO CUSTOMS WITH REGARD TO ANIMALS (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO CATTLE).

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The Significance of Stock to the Luo.

231 The Luo are both pastoral and agricultural people, and so
521 any discussion involving a group of young and old men with regard to the relative importance of animals and crops usually results in an endless debate. As a rule the view is unanimously held by the elders that animals are more important to them than crops; but the young men will often support crops, because since the advent of Europeans to the country the Government has introduced cash crops which are easily grown and marketed to obtain such articles as clothes, soap, lamps, etc. The elders on the other hand support their argument by saying that during a very bad famine poor people die unless they become the servants of cattle-owners who live comparatively normally during hard times. They urge that children brought up in homes where there is plenty of milk grow up finer and more handsome
[753] than those in homes where there is only grain. Again those who stress the importance of animals, go so far as to say that
[511] women in poor homes develop scaly backs. Poor homes for the Luo are homes where, no matter how much grain is stored, there are no cattle, and women usually run away from such homes. Strictly speaking, the word "rich," when used by a typical Jaluo, signifies a man with a large number of stock.

231 The chief animals owned by the Luo are cattle, goats, sheep and poultry. In discussing the importance and uses of these animals to the people of this tribe it would probably be better to take each of them separately.

262 Cattle produce milk which is a valuable and nourishing food and which has other important uses besides being drunk as such. From it the Luo make butter which is used by women and old men for anointing their bodies. Besides this, butter can be turned into ghee which is the favourite animal product used in cooking. Fresh or whole milk is not drunk by the Luo
[372] unless it is mixed with a little sourmilk or buttermilk which
753] has been treated with cow urine. The reason why the milk is not drunk pure is because it is believed that this practice is the cause of human tapeworm infestation. Women and girls who have passed the age of puberty do not drink milk. Stored

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